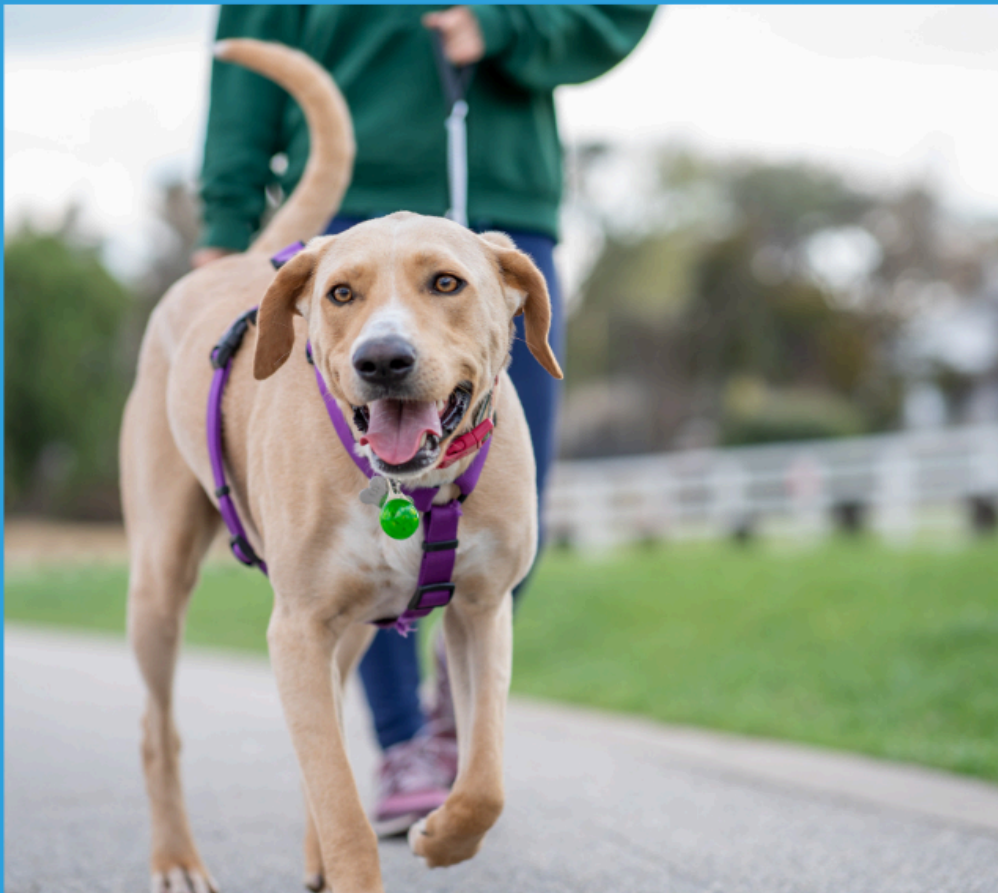


THE PERFECT START

The First 4 Weeks with Your New Dog. Avoid Critical Mistakes Most New Adopters Make



BY RYAN GWILLIAM

The Perfect Start: The First 4 Weeks with Your New Dog

Avoid Critical Mistakes Most New Adopters Make

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to one of the most exciting journeys you'll ever take: bringing home your new dog!

While this guide will help you and your dog get off to a perfect start, it's also going to do something else that is just as important:

Help you avoid the common mistakes that I see well intentioned dog owners make every single day.

But before we start, I want you to focus on what you want:

- A dog who adjusts smoothly to your home
- Clear communication from day one
- A foundation for lifelong good behavior
- Avoid common behavior problems

If this sounds like what you're hoping for, you're in the right place! Because that's exactly why I wrote this guide. So you can have the best companion dog you've ever had.

Legal Disclaimer

This book is for general entertainment and informational purposes only and does not replace professional advice. Consult a certified dog trainer or veterinarian before applying any techniques, as improper use may cause harm to people or animals.

The author and publisher make no guarantees about accuracy, suitability, or results. Animal behavior is unpredictable and varies by individual. We disclaim all liability for any injury, loss, or damage resulting from use of this information. Readers assume full responsibility for their actions.

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WELCOME TO YOUR NEW LIFE TOGETHER

After helping thousands of dogs and their families over the past 18 years, I've learned that the first month is absolutely crucial to your success. I've been blessed to help thousands of rescue and foster dogs stay in their forever homes.

I'm sharing this guide because I've witnessed every possible scenario in dog adoption, from dogs who star in movies to family pets. I've worked with local Utah celebrities and their dogs as well.

My experience in the dog training industry has led to my work being published in The Safe Hands Journal by the International Association of Canine Professionals (IACP), and I've been recognized with multiple professional certifications through the IACP, the AKC's Canine Good Citizen program, and many others.

But here's what really matters: Every single day, I see dogs and their humans succeed when they follow these proven principles. Whether I'm training dogs for commercials, consulting with rescue organizations, or helping families like yours, the foundation remains the same. This guide distills 18 years of hands-on experience with thousands of dogs into exactly what you need to know for the next four weeks.

PRO TIP: The techniques in this guide aren't just theory, they're proven methods we use successfully with dozens of dogs every single day at our facility.

Let me be clear: The first month with your new dog will set the tone for your entire future together. I've created this guide to help you avoid the common pitfalls I've seen countless times so you can build the relationship you've dreamed of.

All of this is possible. Yes, even for your dog. Even if they're a rescue. Even if they're older. The key is to start right now. Let's begin...

Moving Day

Think about how you feel after moving to a new home. Even though it's exciting, it's also overwhelming. You need time to figure out where everything is, get your

bearings, and settle into a routine. Your new dog feels the same way, only multiply that feeling by about a hundred!

WEEK 1 WARNING

Many dogs appear overly calm or well-behaved in their first few days. This isn't meant to last. Don't mistake it for their personality. In time they'll be more confident and show you more of their personality.

Your First Priority: Creating Calm

The secret to success in this first week is surprisingly simple:

Crate Time + Quality Time = Calm, Happy Dog.

This formula has helped thousands of dogs transition smoothly into their new homes, and it's going to help yours too.

PRO TIP: Your dog should be sleeping 18-20 hours a day during this adjustment period. If they're not, they're probably overtired and need more enforced rest periods.

Let's Break Down The Day:

Morning sets the tone for everything, so let's start there. When you wake up, take your dog straight outside for a potty break. Keep it low-key, no excited talking or playing. Just a quiet, leashed walk (yes, even in a fenced yard) to help them relieve themselves. If they don't go within 5 minutes, put your dog back into the crate for 15 minutes, then try again.

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Inconsistent Potty Routines

Giving too much freedom too soon often leads to preventable accidents that can set back house training for weeks or months.

BETTER APPROACH: Keep your dog on a strict schedule and always supervise or crate when you can't watch them.

A great example of this is Sadie, a 2-year-old miniature Poodle who had inconsistent house training. Her new family took her out every 2 hours on leash, quietly saying 'go potty' and praising calmly when she did. Within 3 days, Sadie was accident free and would sometimes even wait by the door when she needed to go out.

Next comes breakfast, and here's something important: stick with your dog's current food for now. There's no reason to change their food just yet! They already have enough changes going on, the last thing you both need is tummy trouble added to the list. You can always change foods later if needed.

Feeding Tip: Give your new dog 10 minutes to eat, then pick up the bowl even if they don't finish. This helps you see exactly how much food they eat each day. If they suddenly eat less, you'll know right away that something might be wrong. When dogs can eat whenever they want, they could be sick for days before you notice. You can change this rule later if you want, but for now, stick to set meal times to keep your new dog healthy and on a good schedule.

Example Schedule

Your Daily Structure Made Simple:

- Wake up & potty
- Breakfast
- Rest
- Potty break
- Quality time (10-45 minutes of play and training)
- Rest in crate
- Potty break
- Quality time (10-45 minutes of play and training)
- Dinner
- Quality time (2-15 minute training game)
- Final potty before bed
- Overnight in crate

⚠ WEEK 1 WARNING

The biggest threat to success this week is doing too much, too soon. Your dog doesn't need adventures, training classes, or social visits yet - they need calm and consistency.

"But my dog hates the crate!"

I hear this a lot, and here's the truth - most dogs actually love their crate once they understand it's their safe space. The key is introducing it properly and using it consistently. The crate should be in a quiet area of your home, away from high traffic. Cover it with a blanket to create a cozy den feeling if that helps your dog settle (it does for most dogs).

PRO TIP: Make the crate inviting by feeding all meals near it initially, then gradually moving the bowl inside. Don't force your dog inside during feeding times, let them choose to investigate at their own pace.

For instance, my Pug named Pig initially whined in her crate. So I placed her meals gradually closer to the crate, then inside the door, and finally at the back. By day 5, Pig was voluntarily napping in her 'den' between activities.

Here's a great checklist we give our training students that will help you avoid bad habits right away. Go through this checklist daily:

House Rules

- Are all of the **toys picked up** and kept out of your dog's reach (excluding chew toys)? Yes No
- Is your dog **dragging a leash** in the home? Yes No
- When your dog is out of the kennel, are you watching them? Yes No
- Are you picking up your dogs' food after 10 minutes of feeding them? Yes No
- How did you greet your dog when you got home to see them today? And how did they react?

These 5 checkpoints alone will set your new dog up for success and help you form good habits from the get go!

Signs Your Dog Is Adjusting Quickly:

- Your dog is sleeping soundly in their crate
- They're eating their meals
- They're going potty on schedule
- They seem calm (not panting or pacing)
- They're starting to look to you for guidance

Red Flags to Watch For:

- Excessive panting
- Pacing
- Unable to settle

If you notice any of these, it's usually a sign your dog needs more rest and quiet time. If you're having a hard time getting your dog to settle, or they seem stressed when they should be relaxing, it may be time to consult a professional trainer.

Remember: This 1st quiet week isn't just about helping your dog adjust, it's building the foundation for your entire future together. Every time you resist the urge to "do more" and instead give your dog the quiet time they need, you're making an investment in your long-term success.

Play and walks are important for your new dog! But between these fun times, your dog needs to learn how to relax. When playtime ends, help your dog calm down and rest until the next activity. Don't let your dog boss you around by barking or pawing for more attention. This creates bad habits that get worse over time. Instead, teach your dog to wait quietly until you say it's time for a walk or play. This way, you set the schedule, not your dog. Your future self will thank you for teaching your dog patience now!

WEEK 1 BONUS: Want to transform your leash walks starting now? Visit our [YouTube channel](#) and watch our "[How To Teach Your Dog To Come When Called](#)" video. This simple technique has helped thousands of dogs learn this life saving command within days. While there, subscribe for weekly training tips!

WEEK 2: BUILDING YOUR FOUNDATION

Welcome to Week 2! If you've followed the Week 1 guidelines, you're probably starting to see your dog settle into a routine. Maybe they're sleeping better, eating well, and even looking to you for guidance. That's fantastic! But there's still a lot to do!

In This Section:

- Common changes you might see in your dog
- Setting up for long-term success
- Preventing common mistakes

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Skipping Professional Training

Many adopters wait until problems develop before seeking training help, making issues harder to resolve.

BETTER APPROACH: Start professional training now, while your dog is still settling in and habits are forming.

WEEK 2 WARNING

Don't mistake good behavior for complete adjustment. Keep following the schedule and using the crate even as your dog seems to settle in. Removing structure too soon can undo your progress.

The Real Work Begins

Remember how I mentioned that doing "less" was important in Week 1? Well, now is when we start building on that foundation - but maybe not in the way you're thinking.

Your dog is like a book that's just starting to open up. You're going to see more of their personality emerge this week, and with that comes both excitement and challenges. This is exactly why Week 2 is the perfect time to connect with a professional trainer.

"But my dog seems fine. Do I really need training?"

Here's something most people don't realize: the best time to start training isn't when problems appear, it's before they have a chance to develop. Think of it like taking your car for maintenance instead of waiting for it to break down on the highway.

What You Might Notice This Week:

- Your dog showing more confidence
- Testing the rules
- More interest in exploring
- Changes in energy levels
- Different reactions to things than during week 1

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Increasing Freedom Too Quickly

Seeing improvement often leads adopters to relax rules and structure too soon.

BETTER APPROACH: Keep consistent boundaries while gradually testing small increases in freedom under controlled circumstances.

House Rules: Time to Get Serious

By now, you should have basic house rules in place. This week, we're going to make sure everyone in the household is on the same page about:

- Where your dog eats
- Where they rest
- How we greet them
- Who controls resources (toys, attention, etc.)

PRO TIP: Create a "House Rules" list and post it where all family members can see it. Consistency from everyone is key to your dog's success. Putting the list on paper makes it far more likely that everyone (including you) follows through.

Bonus Points: have your family help you create the list! If some of the rules are "their idea" they are far more likely to follow the rules.

Setting Up For Success

The most successful adopters are the ones who get professional help before they think they need it. Here's why starting training in Week 2 is perfect:

- Your dog is settled enough to learn
- Bad habits haven't had time to form
- You can prevent common problems
- Your trainer will help you learn to read your dog's subtle signals early

WEEK 2 WARNING

This week often brings a false sense of security. Don't blame the dog when new behaviors or bad ideas pop up. This happens with any new dog, no matter how easy they are to train.

Jim thought his Border Collie mix was 'perfect' at 2 weeks in. By week 4, she was herding the kids and nipping ankles. Our training clients who start early are able to address these instincts before they become bad habits.

FREE TRAINING GUIDE ALERT: Worried about making critical mistakes with your new dog? Text 'DANGEROUS MISTAKES' to 801-516-4012 to get our guide '5 Dangerous Mistakes Dog Owners Make Daily' and learn how to avoid common pitfalls that can lead to serious problems down the road.

WEEK 3: CONFIDENCE & BOUNDARIES

In This Section:

- Understanding the "real" dog emerging
- Why testing boundaries is normal and healthy
- Common behavior changes to expect
- How to stay consistent when things get challenging

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Reacting Emotionally to New Behaviors

As dogs show their true personality, many adopters take behavioral changes personally or respond with frustration.

BETTER APPROACH: Stay calm and consistent, viewing new behaviors as communication rather than defiance.

Bella, a sweet Pittie mix, suddenly started 'forgetting' her sit command in week 3. Her owner Kelly stayed consistent, asking only once, then gently helping Bella into position. Rather than getting frustrated, Kelly noted that Bella tested this only when excited by visitors. This information helped us create a specific greeting protocol for her at her next training session.

Welcome to Week 3 - things are about to get interesting! Remember how I mentioned your dog was like a book starting to open up? Well, this week that book might turn into quite the page-turner.

WEEK 3 WARNING

The "honeymoon period" typically ends this week. Don't panic - this is actually a sign your dog feels secure enough to show their true personality.

The "Honeymoon" Is Ending (And That's OK!)

If you're starting to see some behaviors you didn't notice in the first two weeks, don't panic. Maybe your quiet, perfect dog is suddenly barking at the neighbor's cat. Or your "velcro dog" is now checking out what's on the kitchen counter. Perhaps they're not responding to cues as quickly as before.

PRO TIP: Note new behaviors, what triggers them, and when they occur. Write them down or save these notes to your phone. This information is gold for your trainer.

What You Might See This Week:

- More confidence in exploring
- Testing what they can get away with
- Stronger reactions to things they previously ignored or only had mild reactions to
- New behaviors (both charming and challenging)

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Abandoning Structure

When challenges arise, many adopters either give up on the rules thinking they aren't working so why bother. Or they double down and get extra strict by adding lots of new rules. Both will leave you feeling frustrated.


BETTER APPROACH: Time to hire that trainer!

This is where one of our professional trainers can save you so many headaches. By showing you which rules are essential and which ones you should adjust based on your dog's personality! We will help your dog adjust to their new home at lightning speed! Don't struggle through the trial and error process. We can help you both have clarity now, so you can start enjoying your time together.


When Hope the herding dog mix started barking and pulling on walks in week 3, his owner added more exercise (which actually made things worse)! We helped him replace one long, chaotic walk with two shorter training games. Hope's behavior began improving immediately.

The Truth About "Bad" Dogs

Here's something crucial to understand: If your dog is testing boundaries, it doesn't mean you picked the wrong dog or that they're becoming "bad." In fact, it means your dog trusts you enough to be themselves. That's a compliment! But it's also your cue to reinforce the foundation you've been building.




Sarah Everett
6 reviews • 5 photos



★★★★★ 22 weeks ago

Train, walk, poop was a god send for me. I adopted a very anxious, untrained dog and they helped him blossom!! The day training program was so easy and helpful and worked beautifully with my work schedule. Shout out to Nikko who was excellent with both of my dogs and gave me many helpful training tips and exercises. The entire staff is awesome and friendly. I highly recommend this place for training and daycare!

 **Train Walk Poop**
Owner

Common Week 3 Scenarios:

- The counter-surfer emerges
- Suddenly selective hearing develops
- New sounds cause reactions
- Playing gets more energetic or feisty
- Previously perfect potty habits get tested

PRO TIP: Success this week isn't about preventing all unwanted behaviors, it's about how consistently you guide them to a better choice.

A Note About Exercise

With your dog feeling more confident, you might be tempted to increase exercise to manage new behaviors. But be careful, more exercise isn't always the answer. Often, what looks like excess energy is actually stress or exhaustion. This is where professional guidance is invaluable in finding the right balance for your dog. If your dog seems to need more than 30-60 minutes of run around time each day, chances are you're doing too much. Talk to one of our trainers about "creating a marathon runner" and "giving your dog an off switch" for a great eye opening conversation! You can call us any time at 801-516-4012.

WEEK 3 WARNING

Don't let small issues snowball. What seems cute or like a minor issue now could become a serious problem if ignored.

Staying on Track

The key to success this week is maintaining the structure you've established while properly managing your dog's newfound confidence. This means:

- Keeping consistent rules
- Continuing to use the crate
- Maintaining your routine
- Following your trainer's guidance
- Celebrating small wins

Looking Ahead

Next week, we'll talk about how to take all these changes and start shaping them into lasting good habits. The work you do now will set the stage for everything that follows.

WEEK 4: SHAPING YOUR FUTURE TOGETHER

In This Section:

- Signs your dog is truly settling in
- Turning good moments into lasting habits
- Understanding your dog's real personality
- Planning for long-term success
- When to adjust freedom and privileges

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Assuming the Work is Done

Many adopters relax too much at the one-month mark, thinking their dog is "fully adjusted."

BETTER APPROACH: View Week 4 as the foundation for ongoing growth, not the finish line.

Congratulations on making it to Week 4! By now, you and your dog have been through quite a journey together. Whether it's been smooth sailing or a bit of an adventure, you've reached an important milestone. Let's talk about what happens next.

WEEK 4 WARNING

Don't drop the structure just because things are going well. Consistency remains crucial for long-term success.

The Real Relationship Begins

Remember back in Week 1 when everything was new and a bit uncertain? Look how far you've come! By now, you should have a pretty good idea of who your

dog really is. Not just the shelter dog, not just the honeymoon dog, but the actual personality you'll be sharing your life with.

PRO TIP: Take time this week to document your progress. What's working well? What needs more attention? This reflection will help guide your next training goals.

"But things still aren't perfect..."

Perfect is boring! **If you are seeing progress and are developing a deepening bond, you are on the right track!**

Some days will still have challenges, but now you're better equipped to handle them. If you've been working with our trainers, you have the tools to navigate any bumps in the road.

If you haven't started training yet...

Well, it's never too late to get the support you need.

Signs You're On The Right Track:

- Your dog looks to you for guidance
- They recover from excitement quicker
- Good habits are becoming more natural
- You're better at reading their signals

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Comparing to Other Dogs

Every dog's journey is unique. Comparing your dog's progress to others can lead to unrealistic expectations and will leave you feeling frustrated.

BETTER APPROACH: Focus on your dog's individual progress and celebrate improvements, no matter how small.

The Freedom Question

One of the biggest questions at this stage is: "When can I give my dog more freedom?"

Maybe you're thinking about:

- Leaving them out of the crate while you're gone
- Giving access to more of the house
- Longer off-leash time
- Less structured schedules

PRO TIP: Freedom should be earned in small increments. Test new privileges in short sessions before making permanent changes. This means you give them more freedom in one new way and observe. How does your dog behave? Do they handle the additional freedom with flying colors or do they start taking advantage of it?

Olivia gradually gave her new rescue dog Daisy more freedom by first leaving her out of the crate for just 1 minute while taking out trash. When that went well, she tried 5 minutes while getting groceries from the car. A month later, Daisy could be trusted alone for 2 hours, but only after proper exercise and with certain rooms closed off. She gave Daisy more and more freedom, 1 week at a time, until she could be left alone for several hours a day while Olivia was at work.

Pop Quiz: What should you do if your dog behaves poorly when you give them more freedom?

Answer: Go back to what you were doing before. Stay at that level of freedom for a few more days or weeks before trying to give your dog more freedom again. Chances are they will be ready for it soon, they just aren't ready yet 😊

Looking Ahead: The Next Few Months

While the initial four weeks are super important, your dog will continue to adjust over the next few months. Here's what to expect:

- Deeper bonding as trust builds
- Growing confidence in their place with you
- Increased ability to relax and truly settle

Your Next Step

Don't settle for "good enough" when amazing is within reach. The perfect dog

you dreamed of bringing home? They're in there, waiting to emerge with the right guidance. Let us help you unlock their full potential.

The Power of Commitment

Over the years, we've seen something remarkable: the dogs who maintain their progress long-term all have one thing in common - owners who made a genuine commitment to consistency.

That's why we encourage all our clients to formalize their promise to their new companion. This simple act creates accountability and serves as a powerful reminder of your responsibility in this partnership.

Take a moment to read and sign this promise to your dog. It may seem symbolic, but we've seen this simple step make a big difference in maintaining training success for years to come.

PROMISE TO MY DOG

I, _____, make this promise to my dog, _____. I will use what I've learned from this guide to help us grow together. I understand that you need my patience, love, and time to feel safe in your new home. I promise to:

- Stay patient when training takes longer than expected
- Ask for help when we face challenges
- Celebrate small wins along the way

I'm committed to being the person my dog needs to thrive, so we can enjoy our journey together.

Owner Signature: _____

Date: _____

PRO TIP: Frame this agreement and place it somewhere visible. Perhaps near your dog's food or leash? This daily reminder will help you stay consistent even when life gets busy.

NEXT LEVEL: Ready to take your commitment further? Our clients who join our "30-day Mentorship Program" with Ryan receive a daily email and video that helps solidify the habits that lead to long-term success. Text "30 Day Mentorship" to 801-516-4012 to get signed up for free.

BEYOND THE BASICS: ACHIEVING YOUR DREAMS TOGETHER

CRITICAL MISTAKE: Thinking Training is "Done"

Many adopters stop active training once basic manners have been learned.

BETTER APPROACH: View training as an ongoing journey that strengthens your bond and builds on your foundation.

You've made it through the crucial first month, but this is just the beginning of what's possible. Remember those dreams you had when you first brought your dog home? Let's talk about making them reality.

Laura and her dog Jim completed basic training and soon realized they weren't 'done.' When Jim started acting up on walks a few months later (pulling, lunging, jumping), she decided she needed more help. Many of our training clients maintain skills through monthly group classes, keeping their dogs sharp and social.

Imagine This: walking together on a busy hiking trail, your dog is off-leash but completely connected to you. A squirrel runs by, no problem. Another dog approaches, your dog looks to you for guidance. This isn't just a dream; it's what we help create every day.

Picture yourself at a barbecue, your dog calmly greeting guests, settling when asked, making you proud. While other dogs are jumping or begging, yours is the example of perfect manners. This isn't just possible, it's probable with the right training approach.

OFF-LEASH RELIABILITY: Even challenging dogs can achieve amazing off-leash skills with the right guidance. Text 'OFF LEASH' to 801-516-4012 for our

guide 'Off Leash Dreams for Difficult Dogs' and discover the step-by-step process we use with even the rowdiest pups.

FINAL WARNING

The most common regret we hear? "I wish I'd hired a trainer sooner." Don't wait for problems to develop, build on your foundation now.

Think about:

- Enjoying outdoor cafes with a perfectly behaved companion
- Having a dog who comes running joyfully every single time you call
- A dog who loves being obedient

The Secret to Success


Dogs actually love having a job. They thrive on clear communication and the satisfaction of working with humans. That perfect partnership you're dreaming of? Your dog wants it too!

The best partnerships aren't built on commands, but on clear communication. Don't fall in the trap of relying on commands. They are a great foundation for getting clear with your dog, but you should notice you need them less and less with time. We'll show you how to have that near "telepathy" with your dog where they make good decisions without you having to say anything!

Remember: **Every amazing dog you've ever admired started exactly where yours is now.** The only difference? Someone made the choice to get it done.

Too busy to do it all yourself? We get it! That's why we created our board and train programs! We'll do most of the heavy lifting and you can enjoy all the benefits of a dog who knows how to behave.

Your dream dog is closer than you think. Let's make it happen together.

 **CLAIM YOUR FREE SESSION:** You've made it through the crucial first month! Text 'FREE SESSION' to 801-516-4012 to schedule your complimentary training evaluation. We'll assess your progress and create a custom plan for your next goals.



jessica barnes

32 reviews • 0 photos



★★★★★ Nov 17, 2023

I took my brand new adopted 5 yr old pitbull in for some training after having some awful experiences with her leash walking. After 5 days it's like having a brand new dog! I don't have to fear taking her out or walking her anymore. My miss Punkin and I are having a much better time together, and her recall is like night and day. Highly recommend!

I can't wait to see the fast progress your dog is going to make towards your training goals.

Your friend with treat-filled pockets,

Ryan Gwilliam

Founder

Train Walk Poop

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www.TrainWalkPoop.com

**SCAN TO LISTEN TO THIS
AS AN AUDIO BOOK**

